IN THE CLAIMS

The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-29. (Canceled)

30. (New) A product information acquisition apparatus that acquires product information related to a product with a label attached, said apparatus comprising:

a reading unit operable to read out, from the label, plural types of product information and plural information source addresses each of which corresponds to the corresponding type of product information and specifies a storage location where the product information of the corresponding type is stored;

a display unit operable to display the plural types of the product information read out by said reading unit;

an operation unit operable to receive, from one or more users, a selection of the type of product information, from among the plural types of product information displayed by said display unit; and

an information acquisition unit operable to acquire the product information from the information source address corresponding to the type of product information selected by said operation unit,

wherein said reading unit is operable to read out plural pieces of security information each of which corresponds to the corresponding type of product information

and indicates whether or not access to the storage location where the product information of the corresponding type is stored is to be restricted, and

said product information acquisition apparatus further comprising:

a decision unit operable to decide whether or not the security information for restricting access corresponds to the type of product information selected by said operation unit, and to require the user to enter a password when the decision is made that the security information for restricting access corresponds to the type of product information,

wherein said information acquisition unit is operable to acquire product information of the type that is selected by said operation unit and corresponds to the security information for restricting access when the password entered in response to the requirement of said decision unit is correct, and not to acquire the product information of the type that is selected by said operation unit and corresponds to the security information for restricting access when the password entered in response to the requirement of said decision unit is not correct.

31. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.

32. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the label comprises a noncontact IC tag.

33. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 32,

wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.

34. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the label comprises a two-dimensional code.

35. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.

36. (New) A product information acquisition apparatus that acquires product information related to a product with a label attached, said apparatus comprising:

a storage unit which includes a table indicating plural types of product information and an information source address which corresponds to the type of product information and specifies a storage location where the product information of the corresponding type is stored;

a reading unit operable to read out the plural types of product information from the label;

a display unit operable to display the plural types of product information read out by said reading unit;

an operation unit operable to receive, from one or more users, a selection of the type of product information, from among the plural types of product information displayed by said display unit; and

an information acquisition unit operable to acquire the product information from the information source address corresponding to the type of product information selected by said operation unit,

wherein said reading unit is operable to read out plural pieces of security information each of which corresponds to the corresponding type of product information and indicates whether or not access to the storage location where the product information of the corresponding type is stored is to be restricted, and

said product information acquisition apparatus further comprising:

a decision unit operable to decide whether or not the security information for restricting access corresponds to the type of the product information selected by said operation unit, and to require the user to enter a password when the decision is made that the security information for restricting access corresponds to the type of product information,

wherein said information acquisition unit is operable to acquire the product information of the type that is selected by said operation unit and corresponds to the security information for restricting access when the password entered in response to the requirement of said decision unit is correct, and not to acquire the product information of the type that is selected by said operation unit and corresponds to the security information for restricting access when the password entered in response to the requirement of said decision unit is not correct.

37. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.

38. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the label comprises a noncontact IC tag.

39. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.

40. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the label comprises a two-dimensional code.

41. (New) The product information acquisition apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the information source address is a URL that specifies a web site on the Internet.